Amendments to the Claims

Listing of Claims - This will replace all prior listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An infeed system for feeding an array of workpieces linearly downstream to a processing machine ~~such as an optimizing planer~~, the infeed system comprising:

a workpiece feed path[[,]] operatively coupled to ~~an~~ the ~~optimizing planer~~processing machine, including means for translating the array of workpieces downstream toward[[s a]] the processing machine; and

means, operatively coupled to the workpiece feed path, for setting the size of gaps between successive workpieces in the array of workpieces being translated linearly into the processing machine;

wherein the processing machine comprises at least one of

one or more movable cutting elements operatively coupled to the processing machine; and

one or more movable guiding elements operatively coupled to the processing machine;

wherein the means for setting the size of gaps is configured to set the gaps to provide enough time for at least one of the movable cutting elements or the movable guiding elements to be moved to ~~their respective optimized~~a position[[s]] corresponding to the next successive workpiece in the array of workpieces.

2. (Currently Amended) The ~~apparatus~~ system of claim 1 wherein the gap is sized to leave only enough time for at least one of the movable cutting elements or the movable guiding elements to be moved to ~~their respective optimized~~the position corresponding to the next successive workpiece in the array of workpieces.

3. (Currently Amended) The systemapparatus of claim 1 wherein said means for setting the size of gaps includes
means for accelerating a the workpiece along, and cooperating with, said workpiece feed path so as to control said size of gaps.

4. (Currently Amended) The systemapparatus of claim 3 further comprising workpiece transportation means for transporting the workpiece downstream from said means for accelerating workpiece speed, downstream to thesaid planerprocessing machine.

5. (Currently Amended) The systemapparatus of claim 3 wherein the processing machine is an optimizing planer, the system further comprising:

an optimizing planer;

workpiece interrogation means for interrogating a the workpiece to determine workpiece data corresponding to attributes of the workpiece, and

a workpiece optimization system that receives the workpiece data corresponding to attributes of the workpiece from said workpiece interrogation means, determines an optimized cutting planing solution for the workpiece, and sends control instructions to said means for accelerating a the workpiece.

6. (Currently Amended) The systemapparatus of claim 3 wherein said means for accelerating a the workpiece includes one or more of a fixed speed transverse acceleration device, a variable speed transverse acceleration device, a vertical acceleration device, a fixed speed linear acceleration device, and a variable speed linear acceleration device.

7. (Currently Amended) The systemapparatus of claim 5 wherein said workpiece interrogation means includes one or more of a linear workpiece interrogator and a transverse workpiece interrogator.

8. (Currently Amended) The systemapparatus of claim 4 wherein said workpiece transportation means includes one or more of a fixed speed intermediate transport device and a variable speed intermediate transport device.

9. (Currently Amended) The systemapparatus of claim 3 wherein said workpiece feed path includes one or more of a sheet feeder, a fixed speed lug transfer and a variable speed lug transfer.

10. (Currently Amended) The systemapparatus of claim 1 further comprising a trimmer with trim decision information corresponding to one or more of the successive workpieces; wherein the setting of said size of gaps is determined in part by the trim decision information.

11. (Currently Amended) The systemapparatus of claim 1 further comprising a workpiece interrogator and means for determining in-piece gap-reduction for a the successive series of workpieces in the array of workpieces, wherein said means for setting the size of gaps between successive workpieces cooperates withis operatively coupled to the workpiece feed path and to said means for determining in-piece gap-reduction so as to reduce said size of gaps, the means for determining in-piece gap reduction being operatively coupled to the processing machine and configured to receive workpiece data corresponding to attributes of the successive workpieces from said workpiece interrogator, to determine an optimized planing solution for each of the successive workpieces, and to send control instructions to said means for setting the size of the gaps between successive workpieces.

wherein ~~an~~ the optimized planing solution for ~~a downstream~~a first workpiece ~~in~~ of said successive ~~series of~~ workpieces provides for in-piece setting of the movable cutting elements ~~within said downstream workpiece so as~~ to pre-position the cutting elements for commencing ~~an~~ the optimized planing solution for a ~~next adjacent upstream~~second workpiece upstream of the first workpiece ~~in said successive series of workpieces~~, whereby said size of gap between said ~~downstream~~ first and ~~upstream~~ second workpieces is a reduced size of gap.

12. (Currently Amended) The system~~apparatus~~ of claim 11 wherein said ~~reduced~~ size of gap is reduced to a substantially zero gap.

13. (Currently Amended) The system~~apparatus~~ of claim 5 wherein said workpiece optimization system is operatively coupled to said cutting elements and further comprises means for determining in-piece gap-reduction for a successive series of workpieces in the array of workpieces, wherein said means for setting the size of gaps between successive workpieces ~~cooperates with~~is operatively coupled to said means for determining in-piece gap-reduction so as to reduce said size of gaps, where ~~an~~ the optimized planing solution for a ~~downstream~~ first workpiece ~~in~~ of said successive series of workpieces provides for in-piece setting of the cutting elements within ~~said downstream~~the second workpiece so as to pre-position the cutting elements for commencing ~~an~~ the optimized planing solution for a ~~next~~ second adjacent upstream workpiece ~~in~~ of said successive series of workpieces, whereby said size of gap between said downstream and upstream workpieces is a reduced size of gap.

14. (Currently Amended) The system~~apparatus~~ of claim 13 wherein said reduced size of gap is reduced to substantially zero gap.

15. (Currently Amended) The system~~apparatus~~ of claim 1 wherein the processing machine is a planer, the system further comprising:

(a) workpiece sensing means for sensing one or more of the position, velocity and acceleration of a workpiece in the array of workpieces upstream of the planer; and

(b) a control system that receives data from said workpiece sensing means and using said data from said workpiece sensing means, controls said size of gaps to do one or more of establish, control and correct a minimum required gap between each pair of successive workpieces of the array of workpieces.

16-20 (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) The system~~apparatus~~ of claim 1, wherein said size of gap includes a safety factor.

22. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 5 further comprising:

(a) workpiece sensing means for sensing one or more of the position, velocity and acceleration of a workpiece in the array of workpieces upstream of the optimizing planer; and

(b) a control system that receives data from the workpiece sensing means and controls the size of gaps to do one or more of establish, control, and/~~or~~ correct a minimum required gap between each pair of successive workpieces in the array of workpieces.

23. (Currently Amended) The system~~apparatus~~ of claim 22 wherein the control system and the workpiece optimization system are combined into a singular gap optimization system.

24. (Currently Amended) An infeed system comprising:

a workpiece feed path ~~adapted to~~ operatively coupled to a processing machine to feed an array of workpieces to a processing machine;

one or more workpiece acceleration devices, operatively coupled to the workpiece feed path, for adjusting the speed of a workpiece in the array of workpieces;

one or more workpiece sensors for determining one or more of the position, velocity and acceleration of a workpiece in the array of workpieces;

a control system ~~that~~ coupled to the one or more workpiece sensors and to the one or more workpiece acceleration devices, the control system configured to receive[[s]] the data from the one or more workpiece sensors and to adjust[[s]] the speed of the one or more workpiece acceleration devices in order to set the gap between successive workpieces in the array of workpieces.

25. (Currently Amended) The infeed system of claim 24, wherein the processing machine is an optimizing planer with at least one of a movable cutting element or movable guiding element, the optimizing planer coupled to the control system and configured to determine optimized cutting solutions for each of the successive workpieces, wherein the gap between successive workpieces in the array of workpieces is set to allow enough time for the ~~one or more of~~ movable cutting element[[s]] or movable guiding element[[s]] ~~in~~ of the optimizing planer to be moved to ~~their respective optimized positions~~a position corresponding to the optimized cutting solution for the next successive workpiece in the array of workpieces.